

A Guide to Assessing College Readiness

For Parents of College-Bound Children with Learning Disabilities or AD/HD



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Putney, Vermont

Landmark College's Guide to Assessing College Readiness

For Parents of College-Bound Children with Learning Disabilities or AD/HD

Does your son or daughter aspire to attend college? To help parents assess college readiness, Landmark College has identified five essential foundations that are particularly critical for students with learning disabilities or AD/HD in order to succeed in a traditional higher education setting. Understanding these core areas can help students recognize the challenges that they will face in college and identify areas where additional support and development may be needed.

This guide is designed as a first step in helping students understand the complex sets of skills, abilities and practices associated with these five foundation areas. **Scores obtained using this guide provide an opportunity for discussion; they are not intended to predict or limit a student's potential, or provide a diagnosis.**

At the end of the questions, you will find a brief discussion about each of the five foundations and steps a student can take to improve in that area, based on Landmark College's nearly quarter-century of experience focusing exclusively on educating students with learning disabilities and AD/HD.

DIRECTIONS

For each of the foundation areas, you will find five questions. If your college-bound son or daughter answers "yes," mark the "yes" box adjacent to the question with a check (✓). Count checks marked in the "yes" boxes in each foundation area and record the number in the box marked "total."

Academic Skills	YES
1. Can you read up to 200 pages in a week?	
2. Do you have a system for taking notes?	
3. Can you write a paper of 10 or more organized pages that refers to two or more sources?	
4. Do you have a system for preparing for tests and exams?	
5. Can you clearly summarize a college-level reading assignment?	
Total from this section	
Self-Understanding (Metacognition)	YES
1. Can you define and describe your diagnosis of a learning disability?	
2. Have you read your psychoeducational testing?	
3. Do you know your academic strengths?	
4. Do you know which academic tasks give you the most difficulty?	
5. Can you identify the academic supports you need to be successful?	
Total from this section	
Self-Advocacy	YES
1. Do you know your legal rights as a student with a learning disability or AD/HD?	
2. When you run into difficulty, do you ask for help?	
3. Do you schedule your own appointments with doctors, advisors and counselors?	
4. Do you have access to your psychoeducational testing?	
5. If a school or college refused to provide you with an appropriate accommodation, would you contest the decision?	
Total from this section	
Executive Function	YES
1. Do you have a system for keeping track of your projects, books and papers?	
2. Do you have a system for scheduling and managing your time?	
3. Are you able to ignore difficulties and focus on the task at hand?	
4. Are you able to complete all the steps of a project in a timely manner?	
5. Do you have a strategy for completing tasks that you find boring?	
Total from this section	
Motivation and Confidence	YES
1. Do you have an academic subject that you find interesting?	
2. Do you know what you want to get out of your first year of college?	
3. Do you know that you can succeed?	
4. When you think about what you have to do in college are you excited?	
5. Can you imagine your life in 10 years?	
Total from this section	

HOW TO SCORE THE GUIDE

- Transfer the total for each foundation area into the spaces provided below. (Students may have significant strengths in some foundation areas, yet still struggle in one or more.)
- These totals together and record that number in the box at the bottom for “Total number of questions marked yes.”
- Multiply the total number of answers marked “yes” by four (4) to get the foundation percentile.

Foundation Area	Indications	Score
Academic Skills <i>A student must be able to read and write with a high level of independence.</i>	Scoring below three in this area indicates that a student would benefit from explicit instruction (including direct explanation, guided practice and feedback) in Academic Skills. Further testing can help identify specific skills needing development. At Landmark College, students must take a battery of achievement tests, including one of the following: Nelson Denny, Woodcock Johnson, Gray Oral Reading or Wechsler Individual Achievement Test. Landmark accepts students reading below a sixth-grade level as well as students entering from some of the most selective colleges and universities in the country. Testing helps us meet our goal of ensuring that every student has the academic skills needed to work independently at the college level. Explicit instruction techniques are an integral part of Landmark College's approach to teaching.	
Self-Understanding (Metacognition) <i>A student must be intimately aware of his or her strengths and challenges in learning.</i>	A score lower than three in Self-Understanding suggests that a student would benefit from further development of metacognition – a student's awareness and understanding of his own learning profile. The first step is for the student to meet with the psychologist or neuropsychologist who conducted the testing – or another qualified provider – for a thorough explanation of test results. At Landmark, first semester students are required to engage in an in-depth research project involving their testing. Our staff neurophysiologist works closely with students as well as their advisors and professors to help them understand the results. Students are often retested to clarify any gaps.	
Self-Advocacy <i>A student must independently ask for – and at times even fight for – services and support.</i>	Scoring less than three in Self-Advocacy indicates that a student would benefit from instruction in the laws and regulations regarding individuals with disabilities and higher education. Because college students are adults, they cannot be compelled to use services and accommodations and, therefore, are required to advocate for themselves. This means college students must personally request any required accommodations. At Landmark College, first semester students are required to study the laws pertaining to disabilities in higher education and practice self-advocacy under the guidance of advisors and professors.	
Executive Function <i>A student must be able to keep track of assignments, organize books/materials and manage time independently.</i>	A score below three in this area suggests that a student would benefit from focused instruction on executive function skills. At Landmark College, students are required to practice a variety of techniques intended to externalize executive functions. Beginning in their first semester, students learn the Master Notebook System – a weekly planner and e-mail calendar system designed to build new pathways for self-management, time management and organization. Many Landmark students benefit from explicit instruction in executive function from their advisor or a coach. An ADD coach can help students establish clear structures and strategies for managing various projects and determine the next actions required to move each project forward.	

Foundation Area	Indications	Score
Motivation and Confidence <i>A student must have clear set goals and believe that he or she can succeed.</i>	Scoring below three in Motivation and Confidence suggests a student cannot clearly visualize successfully completing a college education. College students who would rather be somewhere else – working for a living, attending trade or technical school, pursuing dreams such as sailing around the world – are unlikely to take advantage of the resources necessary to complete a college degree. Furthermore, students who do not believe they are capable of doing the required work are likely to give up, even skipping classes or finals. For many Landmark students, engaging in studies at the level needed for college involves a constant struggle with self-doubt and insecurity. We know the best antidote is success, but many students need a great deal of encouragement to complete that first semester. Landmark students often benefit from individual coaching to visualize their own success, establish goals and create a plan they can use to achieve those goals.	
Skills Total	Total number of questions marked “yes.”	
Foundation Percentile	Multiply the above Skills Total by four (4) to get the overall percentile.	

UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS

This guide is intended for use as a starting point for discussion. Understanding the areas where a student might struggle can help determine the appropriate supports. Scores developed through the questionnaire should provide a good sense of the various challenges the student faces.

For each Foundation Area, there is a brief definition followed by an explanation of implications associated with the score. These scoring implications for each Foundation Area are considered more important and informative than the overall percentile.

However, scoring 80 percent or higher suggests a student is likely to succeed independently in a traditional college environment. Scoring below 50 percent suggests a student is likely to struggle in a traditional college setting. For these students, the kind of specialized strategies and skills-building offered at Landmark College may be beneficial before pursuing a traditional college experience.

If you have any questions about this guide, contact Landmark College at 802-387-6718.





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